



State Representative Ruth Fahrbach

LOCAL ISSUES

Suffield Land Preservation

The State Bond Commission approved a \$332,065 grant request to preserve the development rights of the James Allen Farm in Suffield. The farm is a 109.2-acre dairy and support farm producing hay and silage corn. The grant will be used to purchase the development rights to the farm, which places a permanent restriction on the use of the land. The acquisition will be a joint partnership between the Town of Suffield and the State. Also, the Bond Commission awarded the Suffield Land Conservancy \$33,750 to purchase 37 acres of the Kope property. The land will be preserved as open space.

Probate Court Consolidation

The first bill passed into law this year (Public Act 06-2) was introduced by myself, Rep. Ferrari and Senator Kissel. The legislation consolidates the probate courts of Suffield and East Granby. The Boards of Selectman of Suffield and East Granby publicly supported the bill. This voluntary consolidation is evidence of how state and local government can work well together and I'm pleased our towns responded positively in support of the new probate court district.

Funding For Windsor Road Renovation

I'm pleased to have been able to help secure a \$600,000 Small Cities grant for the reconstruction of Pleasant Street in Windsor. More than 3,500 feet of roadway will be completely rebuilt, including new storm drains, catch basins, curbing and pavement. New sidewalks, safety railings, and streetlights will also be installed. Many residents use Pleasant Street as a shortcut to bypass the center of town. It also provides convenient access to a boat launch facility and fishing areas along the Farmington River.



Representative Fahrbach, third from left, takes part in a 2005 groundbreaking ceremony for the new recreation center at East Granby Farms in East Granby. Reps. Fahrbach and Ferrari and Sen. Kissel helped secure a \$500,000 state grant for the project.

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State Representative
RUTH FAHRBACH
Proudly Serving the 61st District
East Granby ★ Suffield ★ Windsor



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2006 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



State Representative
RUTH FAHRBACH
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Rep. Fahrbach meets with members of the Suffield High School Agriculture Science Center in 2006. The students were visiting the State Capitol as part of the state's Agriculture Day.

SENIORS

Homecare Oversight

House Bill 5846 will help protect the interests of senior citizens by requiring companies providing homemaker or companion services to obtain a certificate of registration from the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP). It also gives DCP authority to suspend, revoke, refuse to issue the registration or take other disciplinary measures in response to violations of the bill.

Under the bill, beginning October 2006, these agencies must require new employees to undergo comprehensive background checks and take specified factors into account when making employment decisions based on the checks. Homecare agencies must also provide their clients with written individualized contracts or service plans that identify the services' scope, type, frequency, and duration. In addition, agencies that enter into a contract with a client's family must detail exact compensation.

Property Tax Freeze

House Bill 5093 allows municipalities to freeze the property taxes on homes owned by certain elderly people. To be eligible, the homeowner or his spouse must be age 70 or older and have lived in the state at least one year. The freeze continues for a surviving spouse who is at least age 62 when the homeowner dies. Homeowners must meet the same income limits that apply to the existing state-reimbursed "circuit breaker" program, which currently gives qualified homeowners age 65 or over a tax credit against the property taxes on their homes.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Prohibiting Underage Drinking On Private Property

House Bill 5211 is designed to address a loophole in state law that has allowed underage drinking on private property. Under current law, the penalty for illegal possession in public places is a fine of \$200 to \$500. The bill makes it illegal for a minor to possess alcohol anywhere, rather than only in public places and makes a first offense an infraction. HB 5211 makes subsequent offenses subject to up to one year in prison, a fine of up to \$500, or both.

The new law specifies that a minor may only possess alcohol on private property if accompanied by a parent, guardian, or spouse over age 21.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Improving Hospital Admission Process

In many cases, a patient's primary care physician has no involvement in their hospitalization process. This system can be detrimental to the comfort level of the patient but can also prevent their primary doctor from offering important personal medical history and information at a crucial time. Senate Bill 317 requires the Quality of Care Advisory Commission to make recommendations on best practices concerning communications between patients' primary care providers and other providers involved in patient care. The commission must make its recommendations to the Department of Public Health by January 1, 2008.

Reducing Hospital Infections

Senate Bill 160 will help reduce infections acquired in hospitals, which can lead to very serious medical problems. The legislation creates a committee to develop a mandatory reporting system for all healthcare associated infections. In addition, the report must be posted on the DPH website and be available to the public. Because this legislation establishes a detailed reporting system, it marks an excellent step toward reducing such infections.

Direct Access To Physical Therapy

Under current law, physical therapists can only treat patients referred to them by a physician or other healthcare practitioner. Senate Bill 164 allows patients to be directly treated by physical therapists and specifies procedures they must follow in treating patients directly.

CONSUMER PROTECTION

Protection Against Identity Theft

Public Act 06-60 outlaws the use of small scanners and reencoders to create fake credit cards. This is an ever increasing problem throughout the country and the bill is a positive step towards protecting our residents. Penalties for violating the new law include up to 10 years imprisonment, fines of up to \$10,000 or both.

TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

\$2.3 Billion Package

House Bill 5844 will provide for improvements to highways and mass transit, allocating \$2.3 billion over a 10-year period. Projects to be funded include: restoring commuter rail service on the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield line, including shuttle bus service from the line to Bradley International Airport, and dredging of the state's commercial ports.

SPENDING AND TAXES

2006-2007 State Budget

There were several good points in the 2005-2007 budget package that was approved this year. These include:

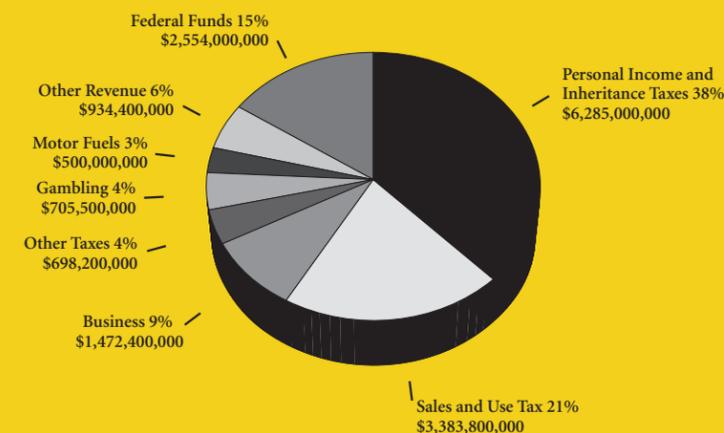
- Providing a welcome tax break. The maximum property tax credit on the state income tax, which was scheduled to rise from \$350 to \$400, will instead be raised to \$500.
- To help promote business development, it repeals the 15 percent corporation tax credit surcharge in 2007 and offer tax credits for companies that hire displaced workers and create at least 50 new, full-time jobs.

Each town in the 61st District received increased municipal aid for the 2006-2007 Fiscal Year. Based on a statutory formula: East Granby will receive \$1,793,368 in state aid, an increase of \$72,071, it will also receive a one-time revenue sharing grant of \$16,612; Suffield will receive \$9,811,240 in state aid, an increase of \$228,601, it will also receive a one time revenue sharing grant of \$39,801; Windsor will receive \$10,688,649 in state aid, an increase of \$450,200, it will also receive a one time revenue sharing grant of \$202,420.

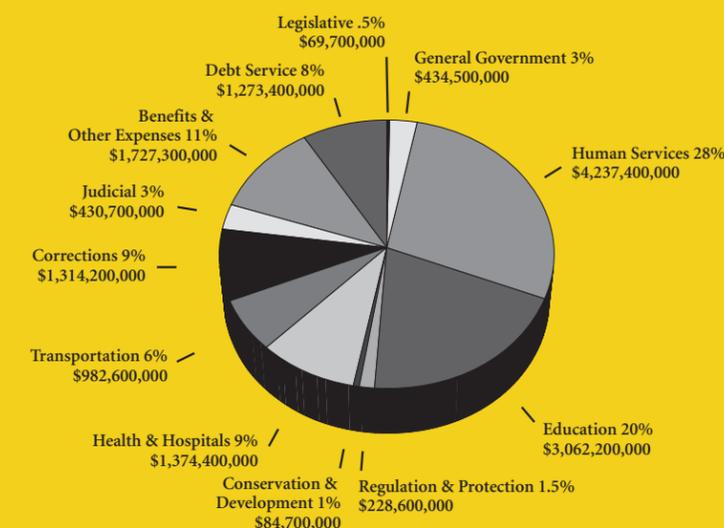
BUDGET ENDING JUNE 30, 2006

The 2006 general fund and the special transportation fund spends \$15.2 billion.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?



WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?



*In addition to an expected surplus, the difference between expenditures and revenues is due to tax refunds.